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ABSTRACT

The Workforce Education and Development Off-Campus Degree Program of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale allows military and civilian students to complete bachelor of science degrees in education with a major in work force education and development at 1 civilian site and 16 military bases throughout the United States. Approximately 1,000 students participate in the weekend degree program at any given time. The program includes six courses to be completed within 1 calendar year, four independent study courses, and an internship. The program features vocational skill training, academic instruction integrated with occupational education, and work-based education coordinated with classroom-based instruction. The program's components are as follows: 36-semester-hour major completed at students' sites; university core curriculum courses completed at local community colleges or other colleges/universities or by approved testing; and 225-hour "instructional internship" with an education institution or training establishment for adults or a "professional internships" with a training department of a civilian business/industry or other educational enterprise for 5 semester hours. At the end of their internships, students submit internship packages that include activities logs, mentor evaluation sheets, reaction papers, and work samples. The program has proved a successful way of helping adults obtain college degrees while gaining real-world experience. (MN)

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PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND THE MILITARY

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The proliferation of advanced technologies as described in Workforce 2000 (Johnstone, 1987) has occurred before the time predicted. Powerful technology has impacted nearly every business, home, and certainly every educator. Along with advanced technology, educators are being bombarded from every direction with recommendations regarding what and how to teach. For example, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report which was a result of discussions and meetings with business owners, public employers, unions, and workers and supervisors in shops, plants and stores, emphasized that good jobs will increasingly depend on people who can put knowledge to work. SCANS has impacted vocational education in various ways.

The SCANS report indicated that the most effective way to learning skills is "in context," placing learning objectives with real environment. Contextual learning is the weaving together--using real-world practices to help the students grasp the relevance of what they are learning.

Experiential education for vocational students has been significant since apprenticeships at the beginning of the century. Internships enhance students' academic knowledge by making it more "relevant." Internship programs present an opportunity to "try on" a career without being obligated to

Grubb suggests that most education and job training programs violate the above principles.

If one were to search the internet for "vocational or educational internships," over 4,000 internships would appear on the screen. In this discussion, one specific postsecondary internship program will be discussed.

Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

Workforce Education and Development

Off-Campus Degree Program

This program provides opportunities for military and civilian students to complete Bachelor of Science Degrees in Education with a major in "Workforce Education and Development" at 16 military bases and one civilian location. Approximately 1,000 students at any given time are participating in the weekend degree program at the 17 locations throughout the United States.

There are six seat-time courses throughout the three trimesters (one calendar year). The first course (Curriculum Development and Occupational Analysis) is taught by the program coordinator at each base. The other five weekend "sit-in courses" are completed over a period of one calendar year, along with four independent study courses and an internship.

Virtually all instructors are required to have a doctoral degree in vocational education or a closely related field.

make a long-term commitment. Employment while in college accelerates professional maturity of students and enriches their academic work (Spinks and Wells, 1994).

Grubb (1996) suggested that one way to develop more effective education and job training systems is be to recombine now-separate programs to link job training with education programs (including adult education) systematically. He suggested that the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STOWA), which was intended to reform high school vocational education programs, can also be interpreted as specifying five elements for successful work-force programs at any level:

> Vocational skill training, of varying length to prepare individuals for jobs of different levels of skill, responsibility, earnings and stability.
>
> Academic instruction, integrated with occupational education. In job training programs, this could refer to remedial instruction, which proves to be necessary for many indivduals.
>
> The inclusion of work-based education, coordinated with classroom-based instruction through "connecting activities." Work-based learning provides a different kind of learning, complementary with classroom instruction.
>
> The connection of every program to the next program in a hierarchy of education and training opportunities. In STWOA, high school programs are explicitly linked to postsecondary opportunities through tech prep. . .
>
> The use of applied teaching methods and team-teaching strategies. By implication, all school-based and work-based instruction should incorporate pedagogies that are more contextualized, more integrated, student centered, active, and project or activitiy based (p. 3).

Instructors from other military bases, local adjuncts or from the main campus are assigned.

The adult students complete the 36-semester hour major at their sites. University Core Curriculum (general education) courses are taken (before, during or after the 36-semester hour major) at local community colleges, other colleges or universities, or by approved testing. All substitute courses taken must be on an approved list. Students receive credit for occupational experience and technical training in the military or private sector.

The Student Internship Experience

During their final semester, students perform a 225 clock-hour "instructional internship" (with an educational institution or training establishment, teaching adults) or a "professional internship" with a training department of a civilian business or industry or other educational enterprise (such as curriculum development) for five semester hours (part of the 36-semester hour program).

At Travis Air Force Base, SIUC has built partnerships with Anheuser-Busch, Inc., in its training department; Chlorox, primarily in developing curriculum for safety training; the local County Sheriff's Department, and United Airlines. Local education agengies participating in partnership with SIU are Fairfield-Suisun Adult School, Vacaville Adult School, and Solano Community College (primarily in criminal justice, emergency-room technician

training). Additionally, public agencies such as Lindbergh Education Center and Adult School in Manteca, California, where a husband/wife student team recently developed and taught a career seminar to over 300 disadvantaged youth and adults, serve as internship mentors.

At the completion of the internship experience, each student submits an "internship package" which includes a log of activities, evaluation sheets from their mentor, a "reaction paper," and samples of their creative work in the internship, and base coordinator's internship observation report.

Recently, during a personal interview by a SIU student with a trainer at Anheuser Busch, Inc., the trainer was asked, "Do you see training needs increasing or decreasing? The trainer responded:

> Definitely on the rise. Everything is changing so quickly with technology. Everything is automating. And with the implementation of CTE (quality) and the empowerment of the workers, we need smarter people.

At the SIUC Workforce Education and Development program at Travis Air Force Base, the focus during the last two years has centered on strengthening the quality of the internship experience for SIU students. An award--a certificate for the "Outstanding Internship" is presented to one student each semester at SIUC at Travis Air Force Base. Some of the internships have resulted in part-time job offers (if student

is still in the military) or fulltime offers. Many internships have resulted in changed career directions. Many service members make smooth transitions to lucrative employment. Some students decide to enter graduate programs.

This is one successful way of helping adults obtain college degrees and gain real-world experience that often lead to employment and often help people "try out" jobs in the civilian sector. It also helps business and industry at the local level.

As indicated in the beginning of this paper, contextual learning will be a key player in determining the overall readiness of students to be successful participants in work places. Creative partnerships must be built by educators with business and industry to provide "contextual" learning for students. They benefit students and employers, and in this instance, the military.

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